2007-08. Some of the steps taken in this regard include Enhancement of DEPB and Duty Drawback rates w.e.f. 1.4.2007, Subvention in the rate of interest provided on pre-and postshipment credit on the outstanding balances, reduction of ECGC Premia rates by 10%, making the Export Earners Foreign Currency (EEFC) account interest bearing, refund of major Service Tax linked to exports etc. However in last few months, Rupee has depreciated significantly.

Effect of Srilankan tea on Indian tea export

478. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of Indian tea has been decreasing rapidly due to superior quality tea production by Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details of the loss suffered by India during the last three years, year-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Union Government to improve the export quality of Indian tea for the international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In order to improve the export quality of Indian tea for the international market, a Quality Upgradation and Product Diversification Scheme is being implemented by Tea Board during the Eleventh Plan period which outlay of Rs. 230 crores. Under this scheme financial assistance by way of subsidy is being extended to the needy tea gardens/factories for replacement of old and worn-out processing machineries, augmenting the processing capacity, creation of new facilities for production of orthodox, green and other specialty teas. Subsidy is also for value addition, setting up of modern blending/packaging units, usage of electronic devices for monitoring and processing of tea at different stages, obtaining quality assurance certification such as ISO/HACCP, Organic tea etc. for the setting up of new tea factories for manufacturing of orthodox teas and mini tea factories by the self help groups of small growers. During the Plan period it is also proposed to set up three quality testing laboratories in order to facilitate the exporters to ensure the export tea consignments conform to the quality standards.

Exports of labour intensive products

479. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been deceleration in exports of labour intensive products;

(b) if so, the remedial steps taken to check the decreasing trend in the export of labour intensive products; and

(c) the action taken to search new markets for export of labour intensive products?